* To enhance PLF of existing plants through Renovation and Modernisation.
* To devise an effective programme in the field of demand side management through energy efficient bulbs, tube lights and agricultural pumpsets etc.

(c) and (d) The provision of single window clearance for power projects has been examined in the Government and not found feasible due to involvement of several statutory agencies in project clearances. The Government have decentralized some of the clearance procedures to the extent feasible in the matter of environment clearance, CEA clearance and approval of foreign direct investment. A High Powered Board under the Chairmanship of Cabinet Secretary and comprising of Secretaries of the concerned Ministries, Chairman in Central Electricity Authority and Chief Secretaries of concerned States Government was constituted in 1991 which serves as a single point forum for faster clearance of the IPP proposals. The Ministry of Power has also constituted the Crisis Resolution Group under the Chairmanship of Ministry of Power to resolve 'last mile' problems of the Independent Power Producers. Apart from this, the Government is monitoring the ongoing projects through various Task Forces set up in the Ministry and through the Empowered Committee under the Chairmanship of Secretary (Power).

Group of Ministers to review the existing schemes of electrification of tribal villages

2822. SHRI S. RAMACHANDRAN PILLAI: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have set-up a Group of Ministers to review the existing schemes relating to electrification of tribal villages, dalit bastis and benefiting the other weaker sections and suggest modifications for accelerating the pace of electrification so that they can enjoy the benefit of electrification to the same extent as other areas/sections of the population;

(b) if so, the recommendations of Group of Ministers; and

(c) by when these electrification projects would be taken in hand and completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRIMATI JAYAWANTI MEHTA): (a) Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) in its meeting held on 23.3.2000 constituted a Group of Ministers (GoM) under the Chairmanship of Dy. Chairman, Planning Commission to review the existing schemes relating to electrification of tribal villages, dalit bastis and benefiting other weaker sections and suggest modifications for accelerating the pace of rural electrification. Besides, the Group of Ministers (GoM) would also consider the general review of future role of manner of operation of Rural electrification Corporation and its sources of funding.

(b) and (c) Two meetings of the GoM were held on 8th January and 9th February, 2001. The recommendations of the Group of Ministers are being finalized.

Effect of providing electricity either free or at subsidised rates to farmers in the country

2823. SHRI K. KALAVENKATA RAO: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a write up in the 'Statesman' of 8th January, 2001 wherein it is stated that State Electricity Boards have been rendered bankrupt by providing electricity either free or at subsidised rate to farmers almost all over the country;

(b) if so, whether Government has taken steps to check large scale thefts and slippages of electricity in transmission and distribution in the country; and

(c) whether any action has been taken against persons working in NTPC and NHPC found to be lax in performing their duty?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRIMATI JAYAWANTI MEHTA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The main reasons for losses of State Electricity Boards (SEBs) are